
DIGEST

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HB No. 911

Abstract: Relative to the School Choice Pilot Program for Certain Students with Exceptionalities, removes the limitation that the program be a two-year pilot program; provides relative to student eligibility requirements regarding residency and grade; and increases the value of the educational certificates issued to parents of eligible students.

Present law establishes the School Choice Pilot Program for Certain Students with Exceptionalities as a two-year pilot program beginning with the 2011-2012 school year in parishes with a population in excess of 190,000 (currently, Caddo, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Lafayette, Orleans, and St. Tammany). Provides for student eligibility including that the student is determined to be in need of special education services for specified exceptionalities, is residing within a pilot program parish, and is entering kindergarten or grades one through eight. Provides for nonpublic school eligibility, requirements, and authority. Provides for program administration and implementation by the state Dept. of Education pursuant to rules and regulations of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Permits parents/guardians of eligible students to apply for educational certificates for the cost of educational services offered by eligible nonpublic schools. Specifies that the value of each certificate shall be determined by the department and shall be an amount equivalent to 50% of the per pupil allocation of state funds to the local public school district in which the eligible student is residing for that school year but shall not exceed the tuition amount charged by the eligible nonpublic school. Requires the department to submit a report to the House and Senate education committees by Aug. 1, 2012, on the implementation of the program including certain information and recommendations.

Proposed law retains present law except as follows:

- (1) Removes the limitation that the program be a two-year pilot program.
- (2) Removes the eligibility requirement that a student is residing within a pilot program parish.
- (3) Removes the eligibility requirement that a student is entering kindergarten or grades 1-8.
- (4) Increases the maximum value of the educational certificate from 50% of the per pupil allocation of state funds as specified in present law to 75% of such allocation.
- (5) Removes requirement that the department's report include recommendations to continue

the program on a pilot basis or implement the program statewide.

(Amends the heading of Part II of Ch. 43 of Title 17 of the L.R.S. of 1950 and R.S. 17:4031(A), (B), (C)(1), and (E))